The Report of the Accreditation Visiting Team

Tabiona School Box 470 Tabiona, Utah 84072

March 10-11, 2004





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Tabiona School Box 470 Tabiona, Utah 84072

March 10-11, 2004

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 10-11, 2004, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Tabiona School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Robert Park is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Tabiona School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Tabiona School.

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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TABIONA SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Robert L. Park	Principal
Reed Turnbow	

Counseling

David Price	Counselor
Robert Park	Counselor

Support Staff

Dorothy Price, Secretary
DaVona Baum, Title I
Julie Tena Gines, EDNET and Kg. Aide
Terry Lewis, Special Ed. Aide
Carole Fabrizio, Librarian, Bus Driver
Judy Price, Fiber Optics Aide, Custodian
Becky Lefler, Elementary Aide
Cristy Bruso, Elementary Aide, Music

Amy Bagley, Head Custodian Idawna Defa, Custodian Vera Potter, Custodian Holly Baum, Lunch Manager Flora Jones, Lunch Worker Max Gines, Bus Driver Karla Gines, Bus Driver

Faculty

Sherry Stringham, Kindergarten and First Grade Veola Gines, Second Grade Bonnie Roberts, Third Grade Tawnya Burt, Fourth Grade Michael Wagner, Fifth and Sixth Grades Leland Gines, Social Studies, Health, P.E. Omar Gutoff, Math Darin Jenkins, Science, Vo. Ag.,
Shop, FFA
Consuelo Sweat, Special Education
Reed Turnbow, English, Music, Speech,
and Drama
Shay Price, Business, FCS, P.E.
Debbie Fabrizio, Business, FCS, P.E.
Robert Park, Junior High Science

TABIONA HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Within a unique and rural setting, our educational mission is to provide each student the opportunity to become a successful and responsible member of society through the acquisition of knowledge, values and skills; also to develop lifelong learning, communication skills, critical thinking and character. We do this through an active cooperative partnership of the home, school and community.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe that:

Education is a right; learning is an individual's responsibility.

All people should be treated respectfully.

Values, moral education, and service are necessary elements in building an individual's citizenship.

Education is providing skills to become a life-long learner.

Education is a shared responsibility.

No individual has the right to inhibit the educational process of another person.

Equitable distribution of funds is an integral part of an educational system.

The family unit is the fundamental unit of society.

High expectations enhance achievement.

School environment is a critical factor in the educational process.

Academic progress is dependent on regular school attendance.

Students have an inherent right of choice and the inherent consequences.

Performance of meaningful work is essential to the quality of life.

Technology is changing the way students learn in the classroom.

Students need to be prepared to live, work and learn in a technological society.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Gwen Callahan, Emery High School, Emery School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Gary Jensen, Milford High School, Beaver School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

TABIONA HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Tabiona is a rural community of approximately 600 people, nestled in the beautiful Tabiona Valley 120 miles east of Salt Lake City, in the foothills of the Uintah Mountains. The valley was opened to settlement in 1905, and the community developed with agricultural and logging enterprises. Agriculture is still an interest of most of the residents. The community has a high poverty level, but the students perform well on national tests and generally seek advanced schooling after graduation. This school is a K-12 school with 142 students.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The faculty and administration at Tabiona School are at the beginning stage of analyzing their profile. They have looked at some data and are collecting more. They have used the data to make changes. The most striking change made because of the use of data has been the Literacy class required of all 7th graders. This 7th grade class is extremely low on reading ability, and the school is attempting to address this problem. The Visiting Team observed that the NSSE rubrics have been used nominally and could lead to further data for improvement.

What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

More data is needed to finalize a profile. More people need to be involved in committees specifically formed to generate and analyze the data needed to make systematic change. More students and parents need to be involved on the individual committees and the School Community Council. Although the School Community Council is functioning quite well, committees to look at specific issues in the school would be helpful.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Analyze attendance records.
- Examine class grades and their relationship to the CRT results.
- Investigate alignment on the full spectrum of K-12 classes and coursework.

- Analyze effects of class time missed for school-excused activities
- Conduct more school climate surveys.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

Members of the school community are just beginning to talk to one another. There are a few parents on the School Community Council, but no other committees are in place. Since the school is small, each individual teacher is his or her own department. They are starting to see the need to collaborate across the curriculum.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The school's self-study includes 5 years of CRT scores and a few survey items. This is the main data being used. Although this has been helpful, more data is needed to generate a basis for decision-making. Even though more data is needed to reflect strengths and weaknesses, the Visiting Team feels comfortable in stating that movement is being made in a positive direction towards systemic improvement. Broader and deeper lines of inquiry would help to project a more accurate picture, however.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Tabiona School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

- 1. Students will demonstrate responsibility, reliability, and respect in their conduct
- 2. Students will improve reading and writing abilities.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

Tabiona School is in the early stages of working collaboratively on a mission statement and direction for the school. The school mission statement will lead the school to its DRSLs and action plans. There are many belief statements given, but there is not yet a shared belief that they will provide a clear and compelling direction for the school.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

The belief statements are a commitment to student achievement. They are inclusive of the feelings of the community and the school. They are all focused on preparing students to live in a complex world. They mirror the values in this conservative community and are an expression of the desired outcomes for Tabiona students.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The school's mission statement and beliefs are what this school and community want for the students. The two DRSLs are an outcome of these desires. They need to be refined and made specific and measurable, but are, in most cases, in alignment with the belief statements.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

Staff members are working together to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and on the Utah Core Curriculum. Individual teachers maintain copies of the current Core Curriculum to ensure that they are teaching standards and indicators as specifically listed in the Core. They are also working diligently to update their lesson plans in order to delete and revise outdated or irrelevant lesson materials. However, a defined system needs to be established to ensure that the Core Curriculum is being followed by all teachers.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

Staff and faculty members have worked cooperatively to develop two DRSLs. However, the DRSLs' wording needs to be expanded, and they also need to be measurable (e.g., how can progress toward the goal of "reliability and respect in [student] conduct" be measured?).

Quality Instructional Design:

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

Teachers utilize a variety of instructional techniques and learning experiences to help students learn and stay on task. Computerized programs are widely used in the English classes for reading, writing, and grammar instruction and testing. A combination of hands-on and traditional instructional techniques is being utilized. In most cases, students were actively engaged and working on task.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

Teachers employ a number of different instructional strategies in order to meet the needs of different learners. Excellent hands-on instructional strategies were widely observed in most classes. Students remained fully engaged when a variety of strategies were employed.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

Actual in-class experiences, such as guitar playing by students in a music class and the launching of small hot-air balloons in a shop class, are used to expand student learning. Participation in academic extracurricular activities such as speech, history fair, and FFA activities also provide additional excellent support to student learning.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

Standardized test measurements, as well as individual classroom assessment tools, are utilized to measure student achievement. In most cases, expectations for

student achievement were clearly articulated. In addition, survey data collected from students, teachers, and parents could be effectively used to help develop additional assessment tools. Greater usage of set deadlines for completion of some work would also be helpful.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

In many cases, assessment tools were developed using widely accepted methods that reflect defined performance standards and indicators. Again, using a variety of assessment tools only helps make student performance assessments even more effective. Assessments also reflect the intended purposes of learning based on shared beliefs.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

Assessments have been designed, developed, and used in a timely and equitable fashion. Most students felt that assessment tools were fair and administered correctly. Teachers are working to add even greater variety to these assessment techniques.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

The leadership at Tabiona School is committed to improvement in all aspects of the school. Although there are many challenges inherent in a K-12 situation, these have been minimized by this commitment. This situation involves problems that most schools do not have.

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?

Because of the lack of data, the school has not reached the point of making widespread decisions that are data-driven. The school has implemented a few programs based on the needs of an academically low-scoring 7th grade.

c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?

The Visiting Team could observe no monitoring of student achievement and instructional effectiveness on a comprehensive level, although there is evidence of

individuals using assessments to monitor progress. The CRTs are being used to compare student progress, which led to the implementation of the Literacy class as observed by the Visiting Team.

d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?

There are many responsibilities placed on all leaders in this school. Each wears many hats and tries to cover many areas. It was observed by the Visiting Team that management of the school's organization is well done. The available resources are used to give this small school as many opportunities as other students in larger schools. The building is approximately 20 years old, very well maintained, and kept clean and safe. An effective learning environment was observed.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

The school goals and DRSLs need to be refined and aligned, but every effort is being made to use the resources available for student success.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

Because the School Community Council is the only group meeting and working together, and no committees have been implemented as yet, there are only a couple of parents and one student participating. The council members are just beginning to see that they can be a powerful group that can guide school improvement.

Community Building:

To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

Teachers are in the beginning stages of seeing the need for collaboration, although there is a very close working relationship between the faculty and staff. There is also an impressive sense of community among students. The Visiting Team encourages the staff to continue its efforts to collaborate across departments to increase the sense of a single community and purpose.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The school is in the beginning stages of making efforts to work collaboratively. There is a perfect opportunity here for pure alignment to take place, since all students at all levels are in the same building. More parents and students are encouraged to serve on committees.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

Teachers feel they can become involved in any staff development program that will enhance their academic programs. All faculty members have attended reading workshops and also participated in technology inservice.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

Tabiona School is in the early stages of school improvement. The school has done a tremendous amount of work making a K-12 situation be one that benefits all students. The faculty members have all taken on many responsibilities and made many preparations to meet the core requirements. They have cross-level students in most of their classes, which presents challenges. Students sometimes take classes out of the sequence that seems to be most beneficial, because of the constraints on classes. This out-of-sequence scheduling seems to be working for students. A great deal of effort and work has gone into making this arrangement successful.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met.

Standard II - Student Personnel Services

This standard is met.

Standard III - School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met; the school is very impressive in its ability to meet the needs of a K-12 situation.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met. There is a certified library media specialist.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met sufficiently in the self-study.

Standard VII - Preparation of Personnel

This standard is sufficiently met.

Standard VIII - Administration

This standard is adequately met.

Standard IX - Teacher Load

This standard is more than adequately met.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

The action plan is the logical starting place to begin addressing areas that need active follow-up. It is now time for administrators, staff, parents, and students to move to the next phase—refining the DRSLs into more measurable criteria and organizing the focus groups that can fully implement the DRSLs into the curriculum. Initiation of as many of the seven focus groups as is deemed necessary and logical will automatically help move this whole process to the next, higher level.

b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?

Teachers have started to talk and formulate their ideas on the action plans. There certainly appears to be a realistic commitment to the basic action plan items among school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The district officials and school board have been supportive, but not actively involved in this process.

c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?

The written "Means of Evaluating the School Improvement Plan" lays out clear guidelines for evaluation. However, some guidelines (such as "Evaluate the activity of students," as well as others that involve gathering evidence that students are "being more responsible" and that 7th and 8th graders are better prepared for high school) may be difficult to effectively measure.

These means of evaluation should be expanded or reworded to be made easier to quantify.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- Tabiona School is a wonderful and uniquely small community school. Although it is small, there are many very positive activities taking place.
- The teachers at Tabiona are committed to giving the best education possible to their students. They wear many hats and have many responsibilities, which they are handling very well.
- The students feel an affinity to other students across many grade levels. They care for and nurture the younger students who attend school in the same building.

- There are great opportunities for all students to participate in extracurricular activities.
- The leadership of the school is fully committed to continuous improvement.

Recommendations:

- The school improvement process is just beginning. The DRSLs need to be refined and more specific. They also need to be integrated into the curriculum.
- More data needs to be gathered and disaggregated in order to be used effectively in the decision-making process.
- Each action plan item needs to be specific and measurable. Consider the question, "How are we going to know we have accomplished this?"
- More stakeholders need to be involved in the process. Students and parents are needed on committees looking at avenues for improvement. (NSSE recommends seven, but whatever number seems logical to this school will be appropriate.)
- All stakeholders need to be active participants in order for the accreditation process to move to the next level.